

CLAIMS

1. A method of providing multimedia services to digital television receiving apparatus characterised by the steps of :-
 - 5 providing to the receiving apparatus advance information related to the scheduled broadcast time of material to be broadcast;
 - causing the receiving apparatus to connect in advance of the scheduled broadcast time to receive multimedia material related to the material to be broadcast from a source of such multimedia material; and
 - 10 causing that material to be cached.
 2. The method of claim 1 and further comprising the step of providing an indication during broadcast of the said material to be broadcast that additional multimedia material is available.
 - 15 3. The method of claim 2 wherein the indication is visual.
 4. The method of claim 1 in which the material to be broadcast is a scheduled television programme or an advertisement to be broadcast during a scheduled programme and the advance information is provided to the receiving apparatus by an electronic programme guide facility.
 - 20 5. The method of claim 1 in which the material to be broadcast is a television programme or an advertisement and the advance information is provided to the receiving apparatus by a broadcaster.
 6. The method of claim 1 in which the advance information relates to a pre-determined number of the viewer's favourite programmes.
 - 25 7. The method of claim 1 wherein the multimedia material is received via the Internet and in which the availability of multi-media material is indicated by a

URL.

8. The method of claim 7 and further comprising the step of providing an indication during broadcast of the said material to be broadcast that additional 5 multimedia material is available, wherein said URL is inserted into a broadcast stream to determine when said indication is to be provided to the viewer.

9. The method of claim 1 in which the multi-media material is viewable simultaneously with the broadcast programme or advertisement by means of a 10 split screen or screen insert.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein received and cached multimedia material related to the material to be broadcast is time-locked so as to be available to a viewer only at certain times.

15 11. The method of claim 1 wherein the receiving apparatus has a set-top-box facility.

12. Digital television receiving apparatus comprising:
20 interface means for connecting to an information resource; and
storage means, characterised in that the receiving apparatus is configured to receive in advance information related to the scheduled broadcast time of material to be broadcast and to connect via the interface means to the information resource in advance of the scheduled broadcast time to receive 25 multimedia material from the information resource related to the material to be broadcast and to cache said received multimedia material in the storage means.

13. The receiving apparatus of claim 12 and further comprising an electronic programme guide, wherein the material to be broadcast is a 30 scheduled television programme or an advertisement to be broadcast during a scheduled programme and the advance information is provided to the receiving

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apparatus by the electronic programme guide.

14. The receiving apparatus of claim 12 and further comprising an electronic programme guide arranged to store information relating to forthcoming programmes, the guide being further arranged to initiate the receiving apparatus to search one or more information resource for programme-related material.

15. The receiving apparatus of claim 12 wherein the digital television apparatus is in the form of a set-top-box and further includes an output for providing an output signal to an output display means.

16. The receiving apparatus of claim 12 wherein the information resource is Internet based.